2001

Swinging on a Star, International City Theatre, Long Beach, CA

Susan Gratch, Occidental College

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/susan_gratch/19/
I was called about designing this set ten days before drawings were due to the scenic shop because the original designer had to back out. Devised as a review to showcase the songs for which Johnny Burch wrote the lyrics, each scene dedicated to a different decade from the 1920’s to the 1950’s, the set had to serve many functions. Although pared down from my initial designs, the permanent set pieces framed a widely varied and complex series of scenic elements. The settings included a speakeasy, depression streets, a World War II USO show, a 1940’s radio hour, a soundstage for one of the Crosby/Hope/Lamour Road Movies, and a NYC rooftop nightclub. The Center Theater has no fly system, so all set pieces had to either be specially rigged to fly into the limited fly space, or had to travel on to the stage from stage right or stage left. A few rolling set pieces completed the staging in front of the permanent Bandstand center stage.

“Kudos to Susan Gratch for her marvelous set design . . . The theater is transformed into a glamorous ballroom . . .”

Shirle Gottlieb, A classy, ‘Swinging’ treat”
Long Beach Press Telegram, Tuesday, February 20, 2001